

LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. **19**
Edited by E. Haldeman-Julius

The Story of Friedrich Nietzsche's Philosophy

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THE STORY OF FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE'S PHILOSOPHY

I. THE LINEAGE OF NIETZSCHE

Nietzsche was the child of Darwin and the brother of Bismarck.

It does not matter that he ridiculed the English evolutionists and the German nationalists: he was accustomed to denounce those who had most influenced him; it was his unconscious way of covering up his debts.

The ethical philosophy of Spencer was not the most natural corollary of the theory of evolution. If life is a struggle for existence in which the fittest survive, then strength is the ultimate virtue, and weakness the only fault. *Good* is that which survives, which wins; *bad* is that which gives way and fails. Only the mid-Victorian cowardice of the English Darwinians, and the bourgeois respectability of French positivists and German socialists, could conceal the inevitableness of this conclusion. These men were brave enough to reject Christian theology, but they did not dare to be logical, to reject the moral ideas, the worship of meekness and gentleness and altruism, which had grown out of that theology. They remained Anglicans, or Catholics, or Lutherans, long after they had ceased to be Christians. So argued Friedrich Nietzsche.

The secret stimulus of the French freethinkers from Voltaire to August Comte was not to remain behind the Christian ideal . . . but to outbid it if possible. Comte, with his "Live for Others," out-Christianizes Christianity. In Germany it was Schopenhauer, and in England John Stuart Mill, who gave the greatest fame to the theory of sympathetic affections, of pity, and of usefulness to others as the principle of action . . . All the sys-

tems of socialism placed themselves unwittingly . . . upon the common ground of these doctrines.¹

Darwin unconsciously completed the work of the Encyclopedists: they had removed the theological basis of modern morals, but they had left that morality itself untouched and inviolate, hanging miraculously in the air; a little breath of biology was all that was needed to clear away this remnant of imposture. Men who could think clearly soon perceived what the profoundest minds of every age had known: that in this battle we call life, what we need is not goodness but strength, not humility but pride, not altruism but resolute intelligence; that equality and democracy are against the grain of selection and survival; that not masses but geniuses are the goal of evolution; that not "justice" but power is the arbiter of all differences and all destinies. So argued Friedrich Nietzsche.

Now if all this should be true, nothing could be more magnificent or significant than Bismarck. Here was a man who knew the realities of life, who said bluntly that "there is no altruism among nations," and that modern issues are to be decided not by votes and rhetoric, but by blood and men. What a cleansing whirlwind he was for a Europe rotten with delusions and democracy and "ideals"! In a few brief months he had brought a decadent Austria to accept his leadership; in a few brief months he had humbled a France drunk with the legend of Napoleon; and in those brief months had he not also forced all those little German "states," all those petty potentates, principalities and powers to fuse themselves into a mighty empire, the very symbol of the new morality of strength? The growing mili-

¹Quoted in Faguet, *On Reading Nietzsche*, New York, 1918; p. 71.

tary and industrial vigor of this new Germany needed a voice; the arbitrament of war needed a philosophy to justify it. Christianity would not justify it, but Darwinism could. Given a little audacity, the thing could be done.

Nietzsche had the audacity, and became the voice.

II. YOUTH

Nevertheless, his father was a minister; a long line of clergymen lay behind each of his parents; and he himself remained a preacher to the end. He attacked Christianity because there was so much of its moral spirit in him; his philosophy was an attempt to balance and correct, by violent contradiction, an irresistible tendency to gentleness and kindness and peace; was it not the final insult that the good people of Genoa should call him *Il Santo*—"the Saint"? His mother was a pious and Puritan lady, of that same sort that had fostered Immanuel Kant; and, with perhaps one disastrous exception, Nietzsche remained pious and Puritan, chaste as a statue, to the last: therefore his assault on Puritanism and piety. How he longed to be a sinner, this incorrigible saint!

He was born at Röcken, Prussia, on October 15, 1844—which happened to be the birthday of the reigning Prussian king, Frederick William IV. His father, who had tutored several members of the royal family, rejoiced at this patriotic coincidence, and named the boy after the King. "There was at all events one advantage in the choice of this day for my birth; my birthday throughout the whole of my childhood was a day of public rejoicing."²

The early death of his father left him a victim to the holy women of the household, who petted him into an almost feminine delicacy

²*Ecce Homo*, English translation, ed. Levy, p. 15.

and sensibility. He disliked the bad boys of the neighborhood, who robbed birds' nests, raided orchards, played soldier, and told lies. His school-mates called him "the little minister," and one of them described him as "a Jesus in the Temple." It was his delight to seclude himself and read the Bible, or to read it to others so feelingly as to bring tears to their eyes. But there was a hidden nervous stoicism and pride in him: when his school-fellows doubted the story of Mutius Scaevola he ignited a batch of matches in the palm of his hand and let them lie there till they were burnt out.³ It was a typical incident: all his life long he was to seek physical and intellectual means of hardening himself into an idealized masculinity. "What I am not, that for me is God and virtue."⁴

At eighteen he lost his faith in the God of his fathers, and spent the remainder of his life looking for a new deity; he thought he

³Mencken, *The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche*, Boston, 1913; p. 10.

⁴Thus Spake Zarathustra, p. 129. This work will be referred to hereafter as "Z"; and the following (in the English translation) will be referred to by their initials: *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872), *Thoughts Out of Season* (1873-76), *Human All Too Human* (1876-80), *The Dawn of Day* (1881), *The Joyful Wisdom* (1882), *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886), *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887), *The Case of Wagner* (1888), *The Twilight of the Idols* (1888), *Antichrist* (1889), *Ecce Homo* (1889), *The Will to Power* (1889). Perhaps the best of these as an introduction to Nietzsche himself is *Beyond Good and Evil*. *Zarathustra* is obscure, and its latter half tends towards elaboration. *The Will to Power* contains more meat than any of the other books. The most complete biography is by Frau Forster-Nietzsche; Halevy's, much shorter, is also good. Salter's *Nietzsche the Thinker* (New York, 1917) is a scholarly exposition.

found one in the Superman. He said later that he had taken the change easily; but he had a habit of easily deceiving himself, and is an unreliable autobiographer. He became cynical, like one who had staked all on a single throw of the dice, and had lost; religion had been the very marrow of his life, and now life seemed empty and meaningless. He passed suddenly into a period of sensual riot, with his college mates at Bonn and Leipzig, and even overcame the fastidiousness that had made so difficult for him the male arts of smoking and drinking. But soon wine, woman and tobacco disgusted him; he reacted into a great scorn of the whole *biergemüthlichkeit* of his country and his time; people who drank beer and smoked pipes were incapable of clear perception or subtle thought.

It was about this time, in 1865, that he discovered Schopenhauer's *World as Will and Idea*, and found in it "a mirror in which I espied the world, life, and my own nature depicted with frightful grandeur."⁵ He took the book to his lodgings, and read every word of it hungrily. "It seemed as if Schopenhauer were addressing me personally. I felt his enthusiasm, and seemed to see him before me. Every line cried aloud for renunciation, denial, resignation."⁶ The dark color of Schopenhauer's philosophy impressed itself permanently upon his thought: and not only when he was a devoted follower of "Schopenhauer as Educator" (the title of one of his essays); even when he came to denounce pessimism as a form of decadence he remained at bottom an unhappy man, whose nervous system seemed to have been carefully designed for suffering,

⁵B. T., introd., p xvii.

⁶Quoted by Mencken, p. 18.

and whose exaltation of tragedy as the joy of life was but another self-deception. Only Spinoza or Goethe could have saved him from Schopenhauer; but though he preached *aequanimitas* and *Amor fati*, he never practiced them; the serenity of the sage and the calm of the balanced mind were never his.

At the age of twenty-three he was conscripted into military service. He would have been glad to get exemption as near-sighted and the only son of a widow; but the army claimed him nevertheless; even philosophers were welcomed as cannon-fodder in the great days of Sadowa and Sedan. But a fall from a horse so wrenched his breast-muscles that the recruiting-sergeant was forced to yield up his prey. Nietzsche never quite recovered from that hurt. His military experience was so brief that he left the army with almost as many delusions about soldiers as he had had on entering it; the hard Spartan life of commanding and obeying, of endurance and discipline, appealed to his imagination, now that he was free from the necessity of realizing this ideal himself; he came to worship the soldier because his health would not permit him to become one.

From military life he passed to its antipodes—the academic life of a philologist; instead of becoming a warrior he became a Ph.D. At twenty-five he was appointed to the chair of classical philology at the University of Basle, from whose safe distance he could admire the bloody ironies of Bismarck. He had queer regrets on taking up this unheroically sedentary work: on the one hand he wished he had gone into a practical and active profession, such as medicine; and at the same time he found himself drawn towards music. He had become something of a pianist, and had written

sonatas; "without music," he said, "life would be a mistake."

Not far from Basle was Tribschen, where that giant of music, Richard Wagner, was living—with another man's wife. Nietzsche was invited to come and spend his Christmas there, in 1869. He was a warm enthusiast for the music of the future, and Wagner did not despise recruits who could lend to his cause something of the prestige that goes with scholarship and universities. Under the spell of the great composer, Nietzsche began to write his first book, which was to begin with the Greek drama and end with *The Ring of the Nibelungs*, preaching Wagner to the world as the modern Æschylus. He went up into the Alps to write in peace, far from the maddening crowd: and there, in 1870, came to him the news that Germany and France had gone to war.

He hesitated; the spirit of Greece, and all the muses of poetry and drama and philosophy and music had laid their consecrating hands upon him. But he could not resist the call of his country; here was poetry too. "Here," he wrote, "you have the state of shameful origin; for the greater part of men a well of suffering that is never dried, a flame that consumes them in its frequent crises. And yet when it calls, our souls become forgetful of themselves; at its bloody appeal the multitude is urged to courage and uplifted to heroism."⁸ At Frankfort, on his way to the front, he saw a troop of cavalry passing with magnificent clatter and display through the town; there and then, he says, came the perception, the vision,

⁷Letter to Brandes, in Huneker, *Egoists*, New York, 1910; p. 251.

⁸In Halvey, *Life of Friedrich Nietzsche*, London, 1911; p. 106.

out of which was to come his entire philosophy. "I felt for the first time that the strongest and highest Will to Life does not find expression in a miserable struggle for existence, but in a Will to War, a Will to Power, a Will to Overpower!"⁹ Bad eyesight had disqualified him from active soldiering, and he had to be content with nursing; and though he saw horrors enough, he never knew the actual brutality of those battlefields which his timid soul was later to idealize with all the imaginative intensity of experience. Even for nursing he was too sensitively delicate; the sight of blood made him ill; he felt sick, and was sent home in ruins. Ever afterward he had the nerves of a Shelley and the stomach of a Carlyle; the soul of a girl under the armor of a warrior.

III. NIETZSCHE AND WAGNER

Early in 1872 he published his first, and his only complete, book—*The Birth of Tragedy Out of the Spirit of Music*.¹⁰

Never had a philologist spoken so lyrically. He told of the two gods whom Greek art had worshipped: at first Dionysus (or Bacchus), the god of wine and revelry, of ascending life, of joy in action, of ecstatic emotion and inspiration, of instinct and adventure and dauntless suffering, the god of song and music and dance and drama—and then, later, Apollo, the god of peace and leisure and repose, of esthetic emotion and intellectual contemplation, of logical order and philosophic calm, the god of

⁹In Forster-Nietzsche, *The Young Nietzsche*, London, 1912; p. 235.

¹⁰It falls in with their later break that Wagner wrote about the same time an essay "On the Evolution of Music Out of the Drama" (*Prose Works*, vol. x.)

painting and sculpture and epic poetry. The noblest Greek art was a union of the two ideals—the restless masculine power of Dionysus and the quiet feminine beauty of Apollo. In drama Dionysus inspired the chorus, and Apollo the dialogue; the chorus grew directly out of the procession of the satyr-dressed devotees of Dionysus; the dialogue was an after-thought, a reflective appendage to an emotional experience.

The profoundest feature of Greek drama was the Dionysian conquest of pessimism through art. The Greeks were not the cheerful and optimistic people whom we meet with in modern rhapsodies about them; they knew the stings of life intimately, and its tragic brevity. When Midas asked Silenus what fate is best for a man, Silenus answered: "Pitiful race of a day, children of accidents and sorrow, why do you force me to say what were better left unheard? The best of all is unobtainable—not to be born, to be nothing. The second best is to die early." Evidently these men had little to learn from Schopenhauer, or from the Hindus. But the Greeks overcame the gloom of their disillusionment with the brilliance of their art: out of their own suffering they made the spectacle of the drama, and found that "it is only as an esthetic phenomenon," as an object of artistic contemplation or reconstruction, "that existence and the world appear justified."¹¹ "The sublime is the artistic subjugation of the awful."¹² Pessimism is a sign of decay, optimism is a sign of superficiality; "tragic optimism" is the mood of the strong man who seeks intensity and extent of experience, even at the cost of woe, and is delighted to find that strife is

¹¹B. T., 50, 183.

¹²P. 62.

the law of life. "Tragedy itself is the proof of the fact that the Greeks were not pessimists." The days when this mood begot the Æschylean drama and the pre-Socratic philosophy were the "tremendous days of Greece."¹³

Socrates—"the type of the theoretical man"¹⁴—was a sign of the loosened fibre of the Greek character; "the old Marathonian stalwart capacity of body and soul was more and more sacrificed to a dubious enlightenment, involving progressive degeneration of the physical and mental powers."¹⁵ Critical philosophy replaced the philosophical poetry of the pre-Socratics; science replaced art; intellect replaced instinct; dialectic replaced the games. Under the influence of Socrates, Plato the athlete became an esthete, Plato the dramatist became a logician, an enemy of passion, a deporter of poets, a "pre-Christian Christian," an epistemologist. On the temple of Apollo at Delphi those words of passionless wisdom were inscribed—*gnothe seauton* and *meden agan*¹⁶—which became, in Socrates and Plato, the delusion that intelligence is the only virtue, and in Aristotle the enervating doctrine of the golden mean. In its youth a people produce poetry and mythology; in its decadence, logic and philosophy. In its youth Greece produced Homer and Æschylus; in its decay it gave us Euripides—the logician turned dramatist, the rationalist destroying myth and symbol, the sentimentalist destroying the tragic optimism of the masculine age, the friend of Socrates who replaces the Dionysian chorus with an Apollonian galaxy of dialectic.

¹³*The Wagner-Nietzsche Correspondence*, New York, 1921; p. 167.

¹⁴B. T., 114.

¹⁵P. 102.

¹⁶"Know thyself" and "nothing in excess."

ticians. No wonder the Delphic oracle of Apollo had named Socrates the wisest of the Greeks, and Euripides the wisest after him; and no wonder that "the unerring instinct of Aristophanes...comprised Socrates and Euripides...in the same feeling of hatred, and saw in them the symptoms of a degenerate culture."¹⁷ It is true that they recanted; that Euripides' last play—*The Bacchae*—is his surrender to Dionysus, and the prelude to his suicide; and that Socrates in prison took to practicing the music of Dionysus to ease his conscience. "‘Perhaps’—thus he had to ask himself—‘what is not intelligible to me is not therefore unreasonable? Perhaps there is a realm of wisdom from which the logician is banished? Perhaps art is even a necessary correlative of and supplement to science?’"¹⁸ But it was too late; the work of the logician and the rationalist could not be undone; Greek drama and Greek character decayed. "The surprising thing had happened: when the poet" and the philosopher "recanted, their tendency had already conquered."¹⁹ With them ended the age of heroes, and the art of Dionysus.

But perhaps the age of Dionysus may return? Did not Kant destroy once and for all the theoretical reason and the theoretical man?—and did not Schopenhauer teach us again the profundity of instinct and the tragedy of thought?—and is not Richard Wagner another Æschylus, restoring myths and symbols, and uniting music and drama again in Dionysian ecstasy? "Out of the Dionysian root of the German spirit a power has arisen which has nothing in common with the primitive conditions of Socratic culture...—namely, German

¹⁷B. T., 132.

¹⁸P. 113.

¹⁹P. 95.

music...in its vast solar orbit from Bach to Beethoven, from Beethoven to Wagner."²⁰ The German spirit has too long reflected passively the Apollonian art of Italy and France; let the German people realize that their own instincts are sounder than these decadent cultures; let them make a Reformation in music as in religion, pouring the wild vigor of Luther again into art and life. Who knows but that out of the war-throes of the German nation another age of heroes dawns, and that out of the spirit of music tragedy may be reborn?

In 1872 Nietzsche returned to Basle, still weak in body, but with a spirit burning with ambition, and loath to consume itself in the drudgery of lecturing. "I have before me work enough for fifty years, and I must mark time under the yoke."²¹ Already he was a little disillusioned with the war: "the German Empire is extirpating the German spirit," he wrote.²² The victory of 1871 had brought a certain coarse conceit into the soul of Germany; and nothing could be more hostile to spiritual growth. An impish quality in Nietzsche made him restless before every idol; and he determined to assail this dulling complacency by attacking its most respected exponent—David Strauss. "I enter society with a duel: Stendhal gave that advice."²³ In the second of his well-named *Thoughts Out of Season*—"Schopenhauer as Educator"—he turned his fire upon the chauvinistic universities. "Experience teaches us that nothing stands so much in the way of developing great philosophers as the custom of supporting bad ones in state universities...No state would ever dare to

²⁰B. T., 150.

²¹In Halevy, 169.

²²*Ibid.*, 151.

²³*Ibid.*

patronize such men as Plato and Schopenhauer...The state is always afraid of them."²⁵ He renewed the attack in "The Future of Our Educational Institutions"; and in "The Use and Abuse of History" he ridiculed the submergence of the German intellect in the minutiae of antiquarian scholarship. Already in these essays two of his distinctive ideas found expression: that morality, as well as theology, must be reconstructed in terms of the evolution theory; and that the function of life is to bring about "not the betterment of the majority, who, taken as individuals, are the most worthless types," but "the creation of genius," the development and elevation of superior personalities.²⁶

The most enthusiastic of these essays was called "Richard Wagner in Bayreuth." It hailed Wagner as a Siegfried "who has never learned the meaning of fear,"²⁷ and as founder of the only real art, because the first to fuse all the arts into a great esthetic synthesis; and it called upon Germany to realize the majestic significance of the coming Wagner festival—"Bayreuth signifies for us the morning sacrament on the day of battle."²⁸ This was the voice of youthful worship, the voice of an almost femininely refined spirit who saw in Wagner something of that masculine decisiveness and courage which went later into the conception of the Superman. But the worshiper was a philosopher too, and recognized in Wagner a certain dictatorial egotism offensive to an aristocratic soul. He could not bear Wagner's attack upon the French in 1871 (though Paris had not been kind to *Tann-*

²⁵"Schopenhauer as Educator," sect. 8.

²⁶*Ibid.*, sect. 6.

²⁷T. O. S., i, 117.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 104.

häuser!); and he was astounded at Wagner's jealousy of Brahms.²⁹ And the central theme even of this laudatory essay boded no good for Wagner: "The world has been Orientalized long enough; and men now yearn to be Hellenized."³⁰ But Nietzsche already knew that Wagner was half Semitic.

And then, in 1876, came Bayreuth itself, and Wagnerian opera night after night—without cuts—and *Wagnériennes*, and emperors and princes and princelets, and the idle rich crowding out the impecunious devotees. Suddenly it dawned upon Nietzsche how much of Geyer there was in Wagner,³¹ how much *The Ring of the Nibelungs* owed to the theatrical effects which abounded in it, and how far the *melos* that some missed in the music had passed into the drama. "I had had visions of a drama *overspread* with a symphony, a form growing out of the *Lied*. But the alien appeal of the opera drew Wagner irresistibly in the other direction."³² Nietzsche could go in that direction; he detested the dramatic and the operatic. "I should be insane to stay here," he wrote. "I await with terror each of these long musical evenings . . . I can bear no more."³³

And so he fled, without a word to Wagner and in the midst of Wagner's supreme triumph, while all the world worshiped; fled, "tired with disgust of all that is feminism and undisciplined rhapsody in that romanticism, that idealistic lying, that softening of the human conscience, which had conquered here one of

²⁹*The Wagner-Nietzsche Correspondence*, p. 223.

³⁰T. O. S., i. 122.

³¹Nietzsche considered Wagner's father to be Ludwig Geyer, a Jewish actor.

³²*The Wagner-Nietzsche Correspondence*, p. 279.

³³In Halevy, p. 191.

the bravest souls."³⁴ And then, in far-away Sorrento, whom should he encounter but Wagner himself, resting from his victory, and full of the new opera he was writing—*Parsifal*. It was to be an exaltation of Christianity, pity, and fleshless love, and a world redeemed by a "pure fool," "the fool in Christ." Nietzsche turned away without a word, and never spoke to Wagner thereafter. "It is impossible for me to recognize *greatness* which is not united with candor and sincerity towards one's self. The moment I make a discovery of this sort, a man's achievements count for absolutely nothing with me."³⁵ He preferred Siegfried the rebel to Parsifal the saint, and could not forgive Wagner for coming to see in Christianity a moral value and beauty far outweighing its theological defects. In *The Case of Wagner* he lays about him with neurotic fury:

Wagner flatters every nihilistic-Buddhistic instinct, and disguises it in music; he flatters every kind of Christianity, and every religious form and expression of decadence . . . Richard Wagner . . . a decrepit and desperate romantic, collapsed suddenly before the Holy Cross. Was there no German then with eyes to see, with pity in his conscience to bewail, this horrible spectacle? Am I then the only one he caused to suffer? . . . And yet I was one of the most corrupt Wagnerians . . . Well, I am the child of this age, just like Wagner—i. e., a decadent; but I am conscious of it; I defended myself against it.³⁶

Nietzsche was more "Apollonian" than he supposed: a lover of the subtle and delicate and refined, not of wild Dionysian vigor, nor of the tenderness of wine and song and love. "Your brother, with his air of delicate distinction, is a most uncomfortable fellow," said

³⁴*Correspondence*, p. 310.

³⁵*Ibid.*, p. 295.

³⁶C. W., pp. 46, 17, 9, 1; cf. Faguet, p. 21.

Wagner to Frau Förster-Nietzsche; "...sometimes he is quite embarrassed at my jokes—and then I crack them more madly than ever."³⁷ There was so much of Plato in Nietzsche; he feared that art would unteach men to be hard;³⁸ being tender-minded, he supposed that all the world was like himself—dangerously near to practicing Christianity. There had not been wars enough to suit this gentle professor. And yet, in his quiet hours, he knew that Wagner was as right as Nietzsche, that Parsifal's gentleness was as necessary as Siegfried's strength, and that in some cosmic way these cruel oppositions merged into wholesome creative unities. He liked to think of this "stellar friendship"³⁹ that still bound him, silently, to the man who had been the most valuable and fruitful experience of his life. And when, in a lucid moment of his final insanity, he saw a picture of the long-dead Wagner, he said, softly, "Him I loved much."

IV. THE SONG OF ZARATHUSTRA

And now from art, which seemed to have failed him, he took refuge in science, whose cold Apollonian air cleansed his soul after the Dionysian heat and the riot of Tribschen and Bayreuth; and in philosophy, which "offers an asylum where no tyranny can penetrate."⁴⁰ Like Spinoza, he tried to calm his emotions by examining them; we need, he said, "a chemistry of the emotions." And so, in his next book, *Human All Too Human*, (1878-80), he became

³⁷Quoted in Ellis, *Affirmations*, London, 1893; p. 27.

³⁸Cf. Z., pp. 258-264, and 364-374, which refer to Wagner.

³⁹Cf. *Correspondence*, p. 311.

⁴⁰T. O. S., ii, 122.

psychologist, and analyzed with a surgeon's ruthlessness the tenderest feelings and the most cherished beliefs—dedicating it all bravely, in the midst of reaction, to the scandalous Voltaire. He sent the volumes to Wagner, and received in return the book of *Parsifal*. They never communicated again.

And then, at the very prime of life, in 1879, he broke down, physically and mentally, and sank into the vicinity of death. He prepared for the end defiantly: "Promise me," he said to his sister, "that when I die only my friends shall stand about my coffin, and no inquisitive crowd. See that no priest or anyone else utter falsehoods at my graveside, when I can no longer protect myself; and let me descend into my tomb as an honest pagan."⁴¹ But he recovered, and this heroic funeral had to be postponed. Out of such illness came his love of health and the sun, of life and laughter and dance, and *Carmen's* "music of the south"; out of it too came a stronger will, born of fighting death, a "Yea-saying" that felt life's sweetness even in its bitterness and pain; and out of it perhaps a pitiful effort to rise to Spinoza's *aequanimitas*, the cheerful acceptance of natural limitations and human destiny. "My formula for greatness is *Amor fati*:...not only to bear up under every necessity, but to love it." Alas, it is more easily said than done.

The titles of his next books—*The Dawn of Day* (1881) and *The Joyful Wisdom* (1882)—reflect a grateful convalescence; here is a kindlier tone and a gentler tongue than in the later books. Now he had a year of quiet days, living modestly on the pension his university had given him. The proud philosopher could even thaw into a pretty frailty, and find himself suddenly in love. But Lou Salomé did not

⁴¹*The Lonely Nietzsche*, p. 65.

return his love; his eyes were too sharp and deep for comfort. Paul Ree was less dangerous, and played Dr. Pagello to Nietzsche's de Musset. Nietzsche fled in despair, composing aphorisms against women as he went. In truth he was naive, enthusiastic, romantic, tender to simplicity; his war against tenderness was an attempt to exorcise a virtue which had led to a bitter deception and to a wound that never healed.

He could not find solitude enough now: "it is difficult to live with men, because silence is difficult."⁴² He passed from Italy to the heights of the Alps at Sils-Maria in the Upper Engadine—loving not man nor woman neither, and praying that Man might be surpassed. And there on the lonely heights came the inspiration of his greatest book.

I sat there waiting—waiting for nothing,
Enjoying, beyond good and evil, now
The light, now the shade; there was only
The day, the lake, the noon, time without
end.

Then, my friend, suddenly one became two,
And Zarathustra passed by me.⁴³

Now his "soul rose and overflowed all its margins."⁴⁴ He had found a new teacher—Zoroaster; a new god—the Superman; and a new religion—eternal recurrence: he must sing now—philosophy mounted into poetry under the ardor of his inspiration. "I could sing a song, and *will* sing it, although I am alone in an empty house and must sing it into mine own ears."⁴⁵ (What loneliness is in that phrase!) "Thou great star!—what would be thy happiness, were it not for those for whom thou

⁴²Z., 212.

⁴³In Halevy, 234.

⁴⁴Z., 315.

⁴⁵Z., 279.

shinest?...Lo! I am weary of my wisdom, like the bee that hath collected too much honey; I need hands reaching out for it."⁴⁶ So he wrote *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883) and finished it in that "hallowed hour when Richard Wagner gave up the ghost in Venice."⁴⁷ It was his magnificent answer to *Parsifal*; but the maker of *Parsifal* was dead.

It was his masterpiece, and he knew it. "This work stands alone," he wrote of it later. "Do not let us mention the poets in the same breath; nothing perhaps had ever been produced out of such a superabundance of strength. ...If all the spirit and goodness of every great soul were collected together, the whole could not create a single one of Zarathustra's discourses."⁴⁸ A slight exaggeration!—but assuredly it is one of the great books of the nineteenth century. Yet Nietzsche had a bitter time getting it into print; the first part was delayed because the publisher's presses were busy with an order for 500,000 *hymn-books*, and then by a stream of anti-Semitic pamphlets;⁴⁹ and the publisher refused to print the last part at all, as quite worthless from the point of view of shekels; so that the author had to pay for its publication himself. Forty copies of the book were sold; seven were given away; one acknowledged it; no one praised it. Never was a man so much alone.

Zarathustra, aged thirty, comes down from his meditative mountain to preach to the crowd, like his Persian prototype Zoroaster; but the crowd turns from him to see a rope-walker perform. The rope-walker falls, and dies. Zarathustra takes him upon his shoul-

⁴⁶Z., 1.

⁴⁷E. H., 97.

⁴⁸E. H., 106.

⁴⁹Halevy, 261.

ders and carries him away; "because thou hast made danger thy calling, therefore shall I bury thee with my own hands." "Live dangerously," he preaches. "Erect your cities beside Vesuvius. Send out your ships to unexplored seas. Live in a state of war."

And remember to disbelieve. Zarathustra, coming down from the mountain, meets an old hermit who talks to him about God. "But when Zarathustra was alone, he spake thus with his heart: 'Can it actually be possible? This old saint in his forest hath not yet heard aught of God being dead!'"⁵⁰ But of course God was dead, all the Gods were dead.

For the old Gods came to an end long ago. And verily it was a good and joyful end of Gods!

They did not die lingering in the twilight—although that lie is told!⁵¹ On the contrary, they once upon a time—laughed themselves unto death!

That came to pass when, by a God himself, the most ungodly word was uttered, the word: "There is but one God! Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

An old grim beard of a God, a jealous one, forgot himself thus.

And then all Gods laughed and shook on their chairs and cried: "Is godliness not just that there are Gods, but no God?"

Whoever hath ears let him hear,

Thus spoke Zarathustra.⁵²

What hilarious atheism! Not strictly and literally consistent—"Is not just this godliness, that there are *no* gods?" "What could be created if there were Gods? . . . If there were Gods, how could I bear to be no God? *Consequently* there are no Gods."⁵³ "Who is more ungodly than I, that I may enjoy his teach-

⁵⁰Z., 4.

⁵¹A hit at Wagner's *Twilight of the Gods*.

⁵²Z., 263.

⁵³Z., 116-8.

ings?"⁵⁴ "I conjure you, my brethren, remain faithful to earth, and do not believe those who speak unto you of superterrestrial hopes! Poisoners they are, whether they know it or not."⁵⁵ Many an erstwhile rebel returns to the sweet poison at last, as a necessary anesthesia for life. The "higher men" gather in Zarathustra's cave to prepare themselves to preach his doctrine; he leaves them for a while, and returns to find them offering incense to a donkey who has "created the world in his own image—i. e., as stupid as possible."⁵⁶ This is not edifying; but then, says our text:

He who must be a creator in good and evil—verily, he must first be a destroyer, and break values into pieces.

Thus the highest evil is part of the highest goodness. But that is creative goodness.

Let us speak thereon, ye wisest men, however bad it be. To be silent is worse; all unuttered truths become poisonous.

And whatever will break on our truths, let it break! Many a house hath yet to be built.

Thus spake Zarathustra.⁵⁷

Is this irreverent? But Zarathustra complains that "nobody knoweth any longer how to revere,"⁵⁸ and he calls himself "the most pious of all those who believe not in God."⁵⁹ He longs for belief, and pities, all who, like myself, suffer from the great loathing, for whom the old God died and "no new God yet lieth in cradles and napkins."⁶⁰ And then he pronounces the name of the new God:

Dead are all Gods; now we will that supermen live. . .

I teach you superman. Man is a something that

54Z., 245.

55Z., 5.

56Z., 457.

57Z., 162.

58Z., 354.

59Z., 376.

60Z., 434.

shall be surpassed. What have ye done to surpass him? . . .

What is great in man is that he is a bridge and not a goal: what can be loved in man is that he is a *transition* and a *destruction*.

I love those who do not know how to live except in perishing, for they are those going beyond.

I love the great despisers because they are the great adorers, they are arrows of longing for the other shore.

I love those who do not seek beyond the stars for a reason to perish and be sacrificed, but who sacrifice themselves to earth in order that earth may some day become superman's. . .

It is time for man to mark his goal. It is time for man to plant the germ of his highest hope. . .

Tell me, my brethren, if the goal be lacking to humanity, is not humanity itself lacking? . . .

Love unto the most remote man is higher than love unto your neighbor.⁶¹

Nietzsche appears to foresee that every reader will think himself the superman; and tries to guard against this by confessing that the superman is not yet born; we can only be his fore-runners and his soil. "With nothing beyond your capacity...Be not virtuous beyond your ability; and demand nothing of yourselves contrary to probability."⁶² Not for us is the happiness which only the superman will know; our best goal is work. "For a long time I ceased not to strive for my happiness; now I strive for my work."⁶³

Nietzsche is not content with having created God in his own image; he must make himself immortal. After the superman comes Eternal Recurrence. All things will return, in precise detail, and an infinite number of times; even Nietzsche will return, and this Germany of blood and iron and sack-cloth and ashes, and

⁶¹Z., 108 (and 419), 5, 8, 11, 79, 80.

⁶²Z., 423-6.

⁶³Z., 341.

all the travail of the human mind from ignorance to *Zarathustra*. It is a terrible doctrine, the last and most courageous form of Yeasaying and the acceptance of life; and yet how could it not be? The possible combinations of reality are limited, and time is endless; some day, inevitably, life and matter will fall into just such a form as they once had, and out of that fatal repetition all history must unwind its devious course again. To such a pass determination brings us. No wonder Zarathustra feared to speak this last lesson; feared and trembled and held back, until a voice spoke to him: "What matter about thyself, Zarathustra? Say thy word and break in pieces!"⁶⁴

V. HERO-MORALITY

Zarathustra became for Nietzsche a Gospel whereon his later books were merely commentaries. If Europe would not appreciate his poetry perhaps it would understand his prose. After the song of the prophet, the logic of the philosopher; what though the philosopher himself should disbelieve in logic?—it is a tool of clarity, if not the seal of proof.

He was more than ever alone now, for *Zarathustra* had seemed a little queer even to Nietzsche's friends. Scholars like Overbeck and Burckhardt, who had been his colleagues at Basle, and had admired *The Birth of Tragedy*, mourned the loss of a brilliant philologist, and could not celebrate the birth of a poet. His sister (who had almost justified his view that for a philosopher a sister is an admirable substitute for a wife) left him suddenly, to marry one of those Anti-Semites whom Nietzsche despised, and went off to Paraguay to found a communistic colony. She asked her pale, frail

⁶⁴Z., 210.

brother to come along, for the sake of his health; but Nietzsche valued the life of the mind more than the health of the body; he wished to stay where the battle was; Europe was necessary to him "as a culture museum."⁶⁵ He lived irregularly in place and time; he tried Switzerland and Venice and Genoa and Nice and Turin. He liked to write amid the doves that flock about the lions of St. Mark—"this Piazza San Marco is my finest work-room." But he had to follow Hamlet's advice about staying out of the sun, which hurt his ailing eyes; he shut himself up in dingy, heatless attics, and worked behind closed blinds. Because of his eyes he wrote henceforth no books, but only aphorisms.

He gathered some of these fragments together under the titles *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) and *The Genealogy of Morals* (1887); he hoped, in these volumes, to destroy the old morality, and prepare the way for the morality of the superman. For a moment he became the philologist again, and sought to enforce his new ethic with etymologies that are not quite beyond reproach. He observed that the German language contains two words for *bad*: *schlecht* and *böse*. *Schlecht* was applied by the upper to the lower classes, and meant ordinary, common; later it came to mean vulgar, worthless, bad. *Böse* was applied by the lower to the upper classes, and meant unfamiliar, irregular, incalculable, dangerous, harmful, cruel; Napoleon was *böse*. Many simple peoples feared the exceptional individual as a disintegrating force; there is a Chinese proverb that "the great man is a public misfortune." Likewise, *gut* had two meanings, as opposite to *schlecht* and *böse*: as used by the aristocracy it meant strong, brave,

⁶⁵In Figgis, *The Will to Freedom*, New York, 1917; p. 249.

powerful, warlike, godlike (*gut* from *Gott*); as used by the people it meant familiar, peaceful, harmless, kind.

Here then were two contradictory valuations of human behavior, two ethical standpoints and criteria: a *Herren-moral* and a *Heerden-moral*—a morality of masters and a morality of the herd. The former was the accepted standard in classical antiquity, especially among the Romans; even for the ordinary Roman, virtue was *virtus*—manhood, courage, enterprise, bravery. But from Asia, and especially from the Jews in the days of their political subjection, came the other standard; subjection breeds humility, helplessness breeds altruism—which is an appeal for help. Under this herd-morality love of danger and power gave way to love of security and peace; strength was replaced by cunning, open by secret revenge, sternness by pity, initiative by imitation, the pride of honor by the whip of conscience. Honor is pagan, Roman, feudal, aristocratic; conscience is Jewish, Christian, bourgeois, democratic.⁶⁶ It was the eloquence of the prophets, from Amos to Jesus, that made the view of a subject class an almost universal ethic; the “world” and the “flesh” became synonyms of evil, and poverty a proof of virtue.⁶⁷

This valuation was brought to a peak by Jesus: with him every man was of equal worth, and had equal rights; out of his doctrine came democracy, utilitarianism, socialism; progress was now defined in terms of these plebeian philosophies, in terms of progressive equalization and vulgarization, in terms of decadence and descending life.⁶⁸ The final stage in this

⁶⁶Cf. Taine, *The French Revolution*, New York, 1885; vol. iii, p. 94.

⁶⁷B. G. E., 117.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*, 121-3.

decay is the exaltation of pity and self-sacrifice, the sentimental comforting of criminals, "the inability of a society to excrete." Sympathy is legitimate if it is active; but pity is a paralyzing mental luxury, a waste of feeling for the irremediably botched, the incompetent, the defective, the vicious, the culpably diseased and the irrevocably criminal. There is a certain indelicacy and intrusiveness in pity; "visiting the sick" is an orgasm of superiority in the contemplation of our neighbor's helplessness.⁶⁹

Behind all this "morality" is a secret will to power. Love itself is only a desire for possession; courtship is combat and mating is mastery: Don José kills Carmen to prevent her from becoming the *property* of another. "People imagine that they are unselfish in love because they seek the advantage of another being, often in opposition to their own. But for so doing they want to possess the other being. . . . *L'amour est de tous les sentiments le plus égoïste, et, par conséquent, lorsqu'il est blessé, le moins généreux.*"⁷⁰ Even the love of truth is the desire to possess it, perhaps to be its first

⁶⁹D. D., 232.

⁷⁰C. W., 9, quoting Benjamin Constant: "Love is of all feelings the most egoistic; and in consequence it is, when crossed, the least generous." But Nietzsche can speak more gently of love. "Whence arises the sudden passion of a man for a woman? . . . Least of all from sensuality only: but when a man finds weakness, need of help, and high spirits, all united in the same creature, he suffers a sort of over-flowing of soul, and is touched and offended at the same moment. At this point arises the source of great love" (H. A. H., ii, 287). And he quotes from the French "the chastest utterance I ever heard: *Dans le véritable amour c'est l'ame qui enveloppe le corps*"—"in true love it is the soul that embraces the body."

possessor, to find it virginal. Humility is the protective coloration of the will to power.

Against this passion for power, reason and morality are helpless; they are but weapons in its hands, dupes of its game. "Philosophical systems are shining mirages"; what we see is not the long-sought truth, but the reflection of our own desires. "The philosophers all pose as though their real opinions had been discovered through the self-evolving of a cold, pure, divinely indifferent dialectic; . . . whereas in fact a prejudicial proposition, idea or 'suggestion,' which is generally their heart's desire abstracted and refined, is defended by them with arguments sought out after the event." It is these underground desires, these pulsations of the will to power, that determine our thoughts. "The greater part of our intellectual activity goes on unconsciously, and unfelt by us; . . . conscious thinking . . . is the weakest." Because instinct is the direct operation of the will to power, undisturbed by consciousness, "instinct is the most intelligent of all kinds of intelligence which have hitherto been discovered." Indeed, the role of consciousness has been senselessly overestimated; "consciousness may be regarded as secondary, almost as indifferent and superfluous, probably destined to disappear and to be superseded by perfect automatism."⁷¹

In strong men there is very little attempt to conceal desire under the cover of reason; their simple argument is, "I will." In the uncorrupted vigor of the master soul, desire is its own justification; and conscience, pity or remorse can find no entrance. But so far has

⁷¹H. A. H., ii, 26; B. G. E., 9; J. W., 258; B. G. E., 162; W. P., ii, 38.

the Judaeo-Christian-democratic point-of-view prevailed in modern times, that even the strong are now ashamed of their strength and their health, and begin to seek "reasons." The aristocratic virtues and valuations are dying out. "Europe is threatened with a new Buddhism"; even Schopenhauer and Wagner become pity-ful Buddhists. "The whole of the morality of Europe is based upon the values which are useful to the herd." The strong are no longer permitted to exercise their strength; they must become as far as possible like the weak; "goodness is to do nothing for which we are not strong enough." Has not Kant, that "great Chinaman of Königsberg," proved that men must never be used as means? Consequently the instincts of the strong—to hunt, to fight, to conquer and to rule—are introverted into self-laceration for lack of outlet; they begot asceticism and the "bad conscience"; "all instincts which do not find a vent turn inward—this is what I mean by the growing 'internalization' of man: here we have the first form of what came to be called the *soul*."⁷²

The formula for decay is that the virtues proper to the herd infect the leaders, and break them into common clay. "Moral systems must be compelled first of all to bow before the *gradations of rank*; their presumption must be driven home to their conscience—until they thoroughly understand at last that it is *im-*

⁷²B. G. E., 128, 14, 177; W. P., i, 228; G. M., 46, 100. The student of psychology may be interested to follow up psychoanalytic sources in H. A. H., i, 23-27 and D. D., 125-131 (theory of dreams); H. A. H., i, 215 (Adler's theory of the neurotic constitution); and D. D., 293 ("overcorrection"). Those who are interested in pragmatism will find a fairly complete anticipation of it in B. G. E., 9, 50, 53; and W. P., ii, 20, 24, 26, 50.

moral to say that 'what is right for one is proper for another.'" Different functions require different qualities; and the "evil" virtues of the strong are as necessary in a society as the "good" virtues of the weak. Severity, violence, danger, war, are as vulnerable as kindness and peace; great individuals appear only in times of danger and violence and merciless necessity. The best thing in man is strength of will, power and permanence of passion; without passion one is mere milk, incapable of deeds. Greed, envy, even hatred, are indispensable items in the process of struggle, selection and survival. Evil is to good as variation to heredity, as innovation and experiment to custom; there is no development without an almost-criminal violation of precedents and "order." If evil were not good it would have disappeared. We must beware of being too good; "man must become better and more evil."⁷³

Nietzsche is consoled to find so much evil and cruelty in the world; he takes a sadistic pleasure in reflecting on the extent to which, he thinks, "cruelty constituted the great joy and delight of ancient man"; and he believes that our pleasure in the tragic drama, or in anything sublime, is a refined and vicarious cruelty. "Man is the cruelest animal," says Zarathustra. "When gazing at tragedies, bull-fights and crucifixions he hath hitherto felt happier than at any other time on earth. And when he invented hell . . . lo, hell was his heaven on earth"; he could put up with suffering now, by contemplating the eternal punishment of his oppressors in the other world.⁷⁴

⁷³B. G. E., 165 (quoting John Stuart Mill), 59; W. P., i, 308; Z., 421.

⁷⁴G. M., 73; B. G. E., 177; Z., 317.

The ultimate ethic is biological; we must judge things according to their value for life; we need a physiological "transvaluation of all values." The real test of a man, or a group, or a species, is energy, capacity, power. We may be partly reconciled to the nineteenth century—otherwise so destructive of all the higher virtues—by its emphasis on the physical. The soul is a function of an organism. One drop of blood too much or too little in the brain may make a man suffer more than Prometheus suffered from the vulture. Varying foods have varying mental effects; rice makes for Buddhism, and German metaphysics is the result of beer. A philosophy therefore is true or false according as it is the expression and exaltation of ascending or of descending life. The decadent says, "Life is worth nothing"; let him rather say, "*I am worth nothing.*" Why should life be worth living when all the heroic values in it have been permitted to decay, and democracy—that is, disbelief in all great men—ruins, with every decade, another people?

The gregarious European man nowadays assumes an air as if he were the only kind of man that is allowable; he glorifies his qualities, such as public spirit, kindness, deference, industry, temperance, modesty, indulgence, sympathy—by virtue of which he is gentle, endurable, and useful to the herd—as the peculiarly human virtues. In cases, however, where it is believed that the leader and bell-wether cannot be dispensed with, attempt after attempt is made nowadays to replace commanders by the summing together of clever gregarious men; all representative constitutions, for example, are of this origin. In spite of all, what a blessing, what a deliverance from a weight becoming unendurable, is the appearance of an absolute ruler for these gregarious Europeans—of this fact the effect of the appearance of Napoleon was the last great proof; the history of the influence of Napoleon is almost

the history of the higher happiness to which the entire century has attained in its worthiest individuals and periods.⁷⁵

VI. THE SUPERMAN

Just as morality lies not in kindness but in strength, so the goal of human effort should be not the elevation of all but the development of finer and stronger individuals. "Not mankind, but superman is the goal." The very last thing a sensible man would undertake would be to improve mankind: mankind does not improve, it does not even exist—it is an abstraction; all that exists is a vast ant-hill of individuals. The aspect of the whole is much more like that of a huge experimental workshop where some things in every age succeed, while most things fail; and the aim of all the experiments is not the happiness of the mass but the improvement of the type. Better that societies should come to an end than that no higher type should appear. Society is an instrument for the enhancement of the power and personality of the individual; the group is not an end in itself. "To what purpose then are the machines, if all individuals are only of use in maintaining them? Machines"—or social organizations—"that are ends in themselves—is that the *humana commedia*?"⁷⁶

At first Nietzsche spoke as if his hope were for the production of a new species;⁷⁷ later he came to think of his superman as the superior individual rising precariously out of the mire of mass mediocrity, and owing his existence more to deliberate breeding and careful nur-

⁷⁵D. D., 84; Ellis, 50; B. G. E., 121.

⁷⁶W. P., ii, 387, 135; H. A., i, 375.

⁷⁷Cf. Z., 104.

ture than to the hazards of natural selection. For the biological process is biased against the exceptional individual; nature is most cruel to her finest products; she loves rather, and protects, the average and the mediocre; there is in nature a perpetual reversion to type, to the level of the mass,—a recurrent mastery of the best by the most.⁷⁸ The superman can survive only by human selection, by eugenic foresight and an ennobling education.

How absurd it is, after all, to let higher individuals marry for love—heroes with servant girls, and geniuses with seamstresses! Schopenhauer was wrong; love is not eugenic; when a man is in love he should not be permitted to make decisions affecting his entire life; it is not given to man to love and be wise. We should declare invalid the vows of lovers, and should make love a legal impediment to marriage. The best should marry only the best; love should be left to the rabble. The purpose of marriage is not merely reproduction, it should also be development.

Thou art young, and wishest for child and marriage. But I ask thee, art thou a man who darest to wish for a child? Art thou the victorious one, the self-subduer, the commander of thy senses, the master of thy virtues?—or in thy wish doth there speak the animal, or necessity? Or solitude? Or discord with thyself? I would that thy victory and freedom were longing for a child. Thou shalt build living monuments unto thy victory and thy liberation. Thou shalt build beyond thyself. But first thou must build thyself square in body and soul. Thou shalt not only propagate thyself, but propagate thyself upward! Marriage: thus I call the will of two to create that one which is more than they who created it. I call marriage reverence unto each other as unto those who will such a will.⁷⁹

⁷⁸W. P., ii, 158.

⁷⁹Z., 94.

Without good birth, nobility is impossible. "Intellect alone does not ennoble; on the contrary, something is always needed to ennoble intellect. What then is needed? Blood . . . (I do not refer here to the prefix 'Lords,' or the 'Almanac de Gotha': this is a parenthesis for donkeys)." But given good birth, eugenic breeding, and the next factor in the formula for the superman is a severe school; where perfection will be exacted as a matter of course, not even meriting praise; where there will be few comforts and many responsibilities; where the body will be taught to suffer in silence, and the will may learn to obey and to command. No libertarian nonsense!—no weakening of the physical and moral spine by indulgence and "freedom"! And yet a school where one will learn to laugh heartily; philosophers should be graded according to their capacity for laughter; "he who strideth across the highest mountains laugheth at all tragedies." And there will be no moralic acid in this education of the superman; an asceticism of the will, but no condemnation of the flesh. "Cease not to dance, ye sweet girls! No spoil-sport hath come unto you with an evil eye. . . . no enemy of girls with beautiful ankles."⁸⁰ Even a superman may have a taste for beautiful ankles!

A man so born and bred would be beyond good and evil; he would not hesitate to be *böse* if his purpose should require it; he would be fearless rather than good. "What is good? . . . To be brave is good." "What is good? All that increases the feeling of power, the will to power, power itself, in man. What is bad (*schlecht*)? All that comes from weakness." Perhaps the dominant mark of the superman

⁸⁰W. P., ii, 353; B. B. E., 260; Z., 49, 149.

will be love of danger and strife, provided they have a purpose; he will not seek safety first; he will leave happiness to the greatest number. "Zarathustra was fond of all such as make distant voyages, and like not to live without danger."⁸¹ Hence all war is good, despite the vulgar pettiness of its causes in modern times; "a good war halloweth any cause." Even revolution is good: not in itself, for nothing could be more unfortunate than the supremacy of the masses; but because times of strife bring out the latent greatness of individuals who before had insufficient stimulus or opportunity; out of such chaos comes the dancing star; out of the turmoil and nonsense of the French Revolution, Napoleon; out of the violence and disorder of the Renaissance such powerful individualities, and in such abundance, as Europe has hardly known since, and seldom knew before.

Energy, intellect, and pride,—these are the superman. But they must be harmonized; the passions will become powers only when they are selected and unified by some great purpose which moulds a chaos of desires into the power of a personality. "Woe to the thinker who is not the gardener but the soil of his plants!" Who is it that follows his impulses? The weakling: he lacks the power to inhibit; he is not strong enough to say No; he is a discord, a decadent. To discipline one's self—that is the highest thing. "The man who does not wish to be merely one of the mass only needs to cease to be easy on himself." To have a purpose for which one can be hard upon others, but above all upon one's self; to have a purpose for which one will do almost anything *except*

⁸¹Z., 60, 222; *Antichrist*, 128; W. P., ii, 257.

betray a friend,—that is the final patent of nobility, the last formula of the superman.⁸²

Only by seeing such a man as the goal and reward of our labors can we love life and live upward. "We must have an aim for whose sake we are all dear to one another."⁸³ Let us be great, or servants and instruments to the great; what a fine sight it was when millions of Europeans offered themselves as means to the ends of Bonaparte, and died for him gladly, singing his name as they fell! Perhaps those of us who understand can become the prophets of him whom we cannot be, and can straighten the way for his coming; we, indifferent of lands, indifferent of times, can work together, however separated, for this end. Zarathustra will sing, even in his suffering, if he can but hear the voices of these hidden helpers, these lovers of the higher man. "Ye lonely ones of today, ye who stand apart, ye shall one day be a people; from you who have chosen yourselves, a chosen people shall arise; and from it the superman."⁸⁴

VII. DECADENCE

Consequently, the road to the superman must lie through aristocracy. Democracy—"this mania for counting noses"—must be eradicated before it is too late. The first step here is the destruction of Christianity so far as all higher men are concerned. The triumph of Christ was the beginning of democracy; "the first Christian was in his deepest instincts a rebel against everything privileged; he lived and

⁸²D. D., 295, 194-7; T. I., 57; W. P., ii, 221-2, 369, 400; "Schopenhauer as Educator," sect. 1.

⁸³Quoted in Salter, 446.

⁸⁴Z., 107.

struggled unremittingly for 'equal rights'"; in modern times he would have been sent to Siberia. "He that is greatest among you, let him be your servant"—this is the inversion of all political wisdom, of all sanity; indeed, as one reads the Gospel one feels the atmosphere of a Russian novel; they are a sort of plagiarism from Dostoievski. Only among the lowly could such notions take root; and only in an age whose rulers had degenerated and ceased to rule. "When Nero and Caracalla sat on the throne, the paradox arose that the lowest man was worth more than the man on top."⁸⁵

As the conquest of Europe by Christianity was the end of ancient aristocracy, so the overrunning of Europe by Teutonic warrior barons brought a renewal of the old masculine virtues, and planted the roots of the modern aristocracies. These men were not burdened with "morals": they "were free from every social restraint; in the innocence of their wild-beast conscience they returned as exultant monsters from a horrible train of murder, incendiarism, rapine, torture, with an arrogance and compromise as if nothing but a student's freak had been perpetuated." It was such men who supplied the ruling classes for Germany, Scandinavia, France, England, Italy, and Russia.

A herd of blonde beasts of prey, a race of conquerors and masters, with military organization, with the power to organize, unscrupulously placing their fearful paws upon a population perhaps vastly superior in numbers, . . .—this herd founded the State. The dream is dispelled which made the State begin with a contract. What has he to do with contracts who can command, who is master by nature, who comes on the scene with violence in deed and demeanor?⁸⁶

⁸⁵*Antichrist*, 195; Ellis, 49-50; W. P., II, 313.

⁸⁶G. M., 40.

This splendid ruling stock was corrupted, first by the Catholic laudation of feminine virtues, secondly by the Puritan and plebeian ideals of the Reformation, and thirdly by inter-marriage with inferior stock. Just as Catholicism was mellowing into the aristocratic and unmoral culture of the Renaissance, the Reformation crushed it with a revival of Judaic rigor and solemnity. "Does anybody at last understand, *will* anybody understand what the Renaissance was? *The transvaluation of Christian values*, the attempt undertaken with all means, all instincts and all genius to make the *opposite* values, the *noble* values triumph...I see before me a possibility perfectly magical in its charm and glorious coloring . . . *Cesare Borgia as Pope*...Do you understand me?"⁸⁷ Protestantism and beer have dulled German wit; add, now, Wagnerian opera. As a result, "the present-day Prussian is one of the most dangerous enemies of culture." "The presence of a German retards my digestion." "If, as Gibbon says, nothing but time—though a long time—is required for a world to perish; so nothing but time—though still more time—is required for a false idea to be destroyed in Germany." When Germany defeated Napoleon it was as disastrous to culture as when Luther defeated the Church; thenceforward Germany put away her Goethes, her Schopenhauers and her Beethovens, and began to worship "patriots"; "*Deutschland über Alles*—I fear that was the end of German philosophy."⁸⁸ Yet there is a natural seriousness and depth in the Germans that gives ground for the hope that they may yet redeem Europe; they have more of the masculine virtues than the French or the English; they have perseverance, patience,

⁸⁷*Antichrist*, 228. /

⁸⁸Figgis, 47, note; T. I., 51.

industry—hence their scholarship, their science, and their military discipline; it is delightful to see how all Europe is worried about the German army. If the German power of organization could co-operate with the potential resources of Russia, in materials and in men, then would come the age of great politics. "We require an intergrowth of the German and Slav races; and we require, too, the cleverest financiers, the Jews, that we may become the masters of the world... We require an unconditional union with Russia." The alternative was encirclement and strangulation.

The trouble with Germany is a certain stolidity of mind which pays for this solidity of character; Germany misses the long traditions of culture which have made the French the most refined and subtle of all the peoples of Europe. "I believe only in French culture, and I regard everything else in Europe which calls itself culture as a misunderstanding." "When one reads Montaigne, La Rochefoucauld... Vauvenargues, and Chamfort, one is nearer to antiquity than with any group of authors in any other nation." Voltaire is "a grand seigneur of the mind"; and Taine is "the first of living historians." Even the later French writers—Flaubert, Bourget, Anatole France, etc.—are infinitely beyond other Europeans in clarity of thought and language—"what clearness and delicate precision in these Frenchmen!" European nobility of taste, feeling and manners is the work of France. But of the old France, of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; the Revolution, by destroying the aristocracy, destroyed the vehicle and nursery of culture, and now the French soul is thin and pale in comparison with what it used to be. Nevertheless it has still some fine qualities; "in France almost all psychological and artistic questions

are considered with incomparably more subtlety and thoroughness than they are in Germany....At the very moment when Germany arose as a great power in the world of politics, France won new importance in the world of culture."⁸⁹

Russia is the enigma of Europe. Its people have a "stubborn and resigned fatalism which gives them even nowadays the advantage over us Westerners." Russia has a strong government, without "parliamentary imbecility." Force of will has long been accumulating there, and now threatens to find release; it would not be surprising to find Russia becoming master of Europe. "A thinker who has at heart the future of Europe will in all his perspectives concerning the future calculate upon the Jews and the Russians as above all the surest and the likeliest factors in the great play and battle of forces." But all in all it is the Italians who are the finest and most vigorous of existing peoples; the man-plant grows strongest in Italy, as Alfieri boasted. There is a manly bearing, an aristocratic pride in even the lowliest Italian; "a poor Venetian gondolier is always a better figure than a Berlin Geheimrath, and in the end, indeed, a better man."⁹⁰

Worst of all are the English; it is they who corrupted the French mind with the democratic delusion; "shop-keepers, Christians, cows, women, Englishmen, and other democrats belong together." English utilitarianism and philistinism are the nadir of European culture. Only in a land of cut-throat competition could anyone conceive of life as a struggle for mere existence. Only in a land where shop-keepers and ship-keepers had multiplied to such a

⁸⁹Salter, 464-7; E. H., 37, 83; B. G. E., 213-6; T. I., 54; Faguet, 10-11.

⁹⁰G. M., 98; B. G. E., 146, 208; Salter, 469.

number as to overcome the aristocracy could democracy be fabricated; this is the gift, the Greek gift, which England has given the modern world. Who will rescue Europe from England, and England from democracy?

VIII. ARISTOCRACY

Democracy means drift; it means permission given to each part of an organism to do just what it pleases; it means the lapse of coherence and interdependence, the enthronement of liberty and chaos. It means the worship of mediocrity, and the hatred of excellence. It means the impossibility of great men—how could great men submit to the indignities and indecencies of an election? What chance would they have? "What is hated by the people, as a wolf by the dogs, is the free spirit, the enemy of all fetters, the not-adorer," the man who is not a "regular party-member." How can supermen arise in such a soil? And how can a nation become great when its greatest men lie unused, discouraged, perhaps unknown? Such a society loses character; imitation is horizontal instead of vertical—not the superior man but the majority man becomes the ideal and the model; everybody comes to resemble everybody else; even the sexes approximate—the men become women and the women become men.⁹¹

Feminism, then, is the natural corollary of democracy and Christianity. "Here is little of man; therefore women try to make themselves manly. For only he who is enough of a man will save the woman in woman." Ibsen, "that typical old maid," created the "emancipated woman." "Woman was created out of man's

⁹¹W. P., i, 382-4; ii, 206; Z., 141.

rib?—"wonderful is the poverty of my ribs!" says man." Woman has lost power and prestige by her "emancipation"; where have women now the position they enjoyed under the Bourbons? Equality between man and woman is impossible, because war between them is eternal; there is here no peace without victory—peace comes only when one or the other is acknowledged master. It is dangerous to try equality with a woman; she will not be content with that; she will be rather content with subordination if the man is a man. Above all, her perfection and happiness lie in motherhood. "Everything in woman is a riddle, and everything in woman hath one answer: its name is child-bearing." "Man is for woman a means; the end is always the child. But what is woman for man?...A dangerous toy." "Man shall be educated for war, and woman for the recreation of the warrior; everything else is folly." Yet "the perfect woman is a higher type of humanity than the perfect man, and also something much rarer...One cannot be gentle enough towards woman."⁹²

Part of the tension of marriage lies in its fulfilment of the woman and its narrowing and emptying of the man. When a man woos a woman he offers to give all the world for her; and when she marries him he does; he must forget the world as soon as the child comes; the altruism of love becomes the egoism of the family. Honesty and innovation are luxuries of celibacy. "Where the highest philosophical thinking is concerned, all married men are suspect...It seems to me absurd that one who has chosen for his sphere the assessment of existence as a whole should burden himself with the cares of a family, with winning bread, security,

⁹²Z., 248, 169; Huneke, *Egoists*, 266.

and social position for wife and children." Many a philosopher has died when his child was born. "The wind blew through my key-hole, saying, 'Come!' My door cunningly opened of itself, saying, 'Go!' But I lay fettered by my love unto my children."⁹³

With feminism come socialism and anarchism; all of them are of the litter of democracy; if equal political power is just, why not equal economic power? Why should there be leaders anywhere? There are socialists who will admire the book of Zarathustra; but their admiration is not wanted. "There are some that preach my doctrine of life but at the same time are preachers of equality...I do not wish to be confounded with these preachers of equality. For within me justice saith, 'Men are not equal.'" "We wish to possess nothing in common." "Ye preachers of equality, the tyrant-insanity of impotence thus crieth out of yourselves for equality." Nature abhors equality, it loves differentiation of individuals and classes and species. Socialism is anti-biological: the process of evolution involves the utilization of the inferior species, race, class, or individual by the superior; all life is exploitation, and subsists ultimately on other life; big fishes catch little fishes and eat them, and that is the whole story. Socialism is envy: "they want something which we have."⁹⁴ It is however, an easily managed movement; all that

⁹³*Lonely Nietzsche*, 77, 313; Z., 232. The unfortunate Nietzsche never knew the delights of parental slavery.

⁹⁴Z., 137-8; B. G. E., 226; W. P., i, 102 (which predicts a revolution "compared with which the Paris Commune . . . will seem to have been but a slight indigestion"); ii, 208; D. D., 362. Nietzsche, when he wrote these aristocratic passages, was living in a dingy attic on \$1,000 a year, most of which went into the publication of his books.

is necessary to control it is to open occasionally the trap-door between masters and slaves and let the leaders of discontent come up into paradise. It is not the leaders that must be feared, but those lower down, who think that by a revolution they can escape the subordination which is the natural result of their incompetence and sloth. Yet the slave is noble only when he revolts.

In any case the slave is nobler than his modern masters—the bourgeoisie. It is a sign of the inferiority of nineteenth century culture that the man of money should be the object of so much worship and envy. But these business men too are slaves, puppets of routine, victims of busy-ness; they have no time for new ideas; thinking is taboo among them, and the joys of the intellect are beyond their reach. Hence their restless and perpetual search for "happiness," their great houses which are never homes, their vulgar luxury without taste, their picture-galleries of "originals," with cost attached, their sensual amusements that dull rather than refresh or stimulate the mind. "Look at these superfluous! They acquire riches and become poorer thereby"; they accept all the restraints of aristocracy without its compensating access to the kingdom of the mind. "See how they climb, these swift apes! They climb over one another, and thus drag themselves into the mud and depths...The stench of shop-keepers, the wriggling of ambition, the evil breath." There is no use in such men having wealth, for they cannot give it dignity by noble use, by the discriminating patronage of letters or the arts. "Only a man of intellect should hold property"; others think of property as an end in itself, and pursue it more and more recklessly—look at "the present madness of nations, which desire above all to

produce as much as possible, and to be as rich as possible." At last man becomes a bird of prey: "they live in ambush for one another; they obtain things from each other by lying in wait. That is called by them good neighborliness...They seek the smallest profits out of every sort of rubbish." "Today, mercantile morality is really nothing but a refinement on piratical morality—buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest." And these men cry out for *laissez-faire*, to be let alone—these very men who most need supervision and control. Perhaps even some degree of socialism, dangerous as that is, would be justified here: "We should take all the branches of transport and trade which favor the accumulation of large fortunes—especially therefore the money market—out of the hands of private persons or private companies, and look upon those who own too much, just as upon those who own nothing, as types fraught with danger to the community."⁹⁵

Higher than the bourgeois, and lower than the aristocrat, is the soldier. A general who uses up soldiers on the battlefield, where they have the pleasure of dying under the anesthesia of glory, is far nobler than the employer who uses up men in his profit-machine; observe with what relief men leave their factories for the field of slaughter. Napoleon was not a butcher but a benefactor; he gave men death with military honors instead of death by economic attrition; people flocked to his lethal standard because they preferred the risks of battle to the unbearable monotony of making another million of collar-buttons. "It is to Napoleon that the honor shall one day be given of having made for a time a world in which the man, the

⁹⁵T. O. S., i, 142; H. A. H., i, 360; ii, 147, 340; T. I., 100; Z., 64, 305, 355.

warrior, outweighed the tradesman and the Philistine." War is an admirable remedy for peoples that are growing weak and comfortable and contemptible; it excites instincts that rot away in peace. War and universal military service are the necessary antidotes to democratic effeminacy. "When the instincts of a society ultimately make it give up war and conquest, it is decadent; it is ripe for democracy and the rule of shop-keepers." Yet the causes of modern war are anything but noble; dynastic and religious wars were a little finer than settling trade disputes with guns.⁹⁶ "Within fifty years these Babel governments" (the democracies of Europe) "will clash in a gigantic war for the markets of the world."⁹⁷ But perhaps out of that madness will come the unification of Europe—an end for which even a trade-war would not be too great a price to pay. For only out of a unified Europe can come that higher aristocracy by which Europe may be redeemed.

The problem of politics is to prevent the business man from ruling. For such a man has the short sight and narrow grasp of a politician, not the long view and wide range of the born aristocrat trained to statesmanship. The finer man has a divine right to rule—i. e., the right of superior ability. The simple man has his place, but it is not on the throne. In his place the simple man is happy, and his virtues are as necessary to society as those of the leader; "it would be absolutely unworthy a deeper mind to consider mediocrity in itself as an objection." Industriousness, thrift, regularity, moderation, strong convic-

⁹⁶J. W., 77-8; B. G. E., 121; Faguet, 22; H. A. H., ii, 288.

⁹⁷G. M., 255 (this prediction of war was written in 1887).

tion—with such virtues the mediocre man becomes perfect—but perfect only as an instrument. “A high civilization is a pyramid; it can stand only upon a broad base; its prerequisite is a strongly and soundly consolidated mediocrity.” Always and everywhere, some will be leaders and some followers; the majority will be compelled, and will be happy, to work under the intellectual direction of higher men.⁹⁸

Wherever I found living things, there also I heard the speech of obedience. All living things are things that obey. And this is the second: he is commanded who cannot obey his own self. This is the way of living things. But this is the third I heard: to command is more difficult than to obey. And not only that the commander beareth the burden of all who obey, and that this burden easily crusheth him—an effort and a jeopardy appeared unto me to be contained in all commanding; and whenever living things command they risk themselves.⁹⁹

The ideal society, then, would be divided into three classes: producers (farmers, proletaires and business men), officials (soldiers and functionaries), and rulers. The latter would rule, but they would not officiate in government; the actual work of government is a menial task. The rulers will be philosopher-statesmen rather than office-holders. Their power will rest on the control of credit and the army; but they themselves will live more like soldiers than like financiers. They will be Plato's guardians again; Plato was right—philosophers are the highest men. They will be men of refinement as well as of courage and strength; scholars and generals in one. They will be united by courtesy and *corps d'esprit*: “These

⁹⁸Antichrist, 219-220.

⁹⁹Z., 159.

men are kept rigorously within bounds by morality,¹⁰⁰ veneration, custom, gratitude, still more by reciprocal surveillance, by jealousy *inter pares*; and on the other hand, in their attitude towards one another they will be inventive in consideration, self-command, delicacy, pride, and friendship."¹⁰¹

Will this aristocracy be a caste, and their power hereditary? For the most part, yes, with occasional openings to let in new blood. But nothing can so contaminate and weaken an aristocracy as marrying rich vulgarians, after the habit of the English aristocracy; it was such intermarriage that ruined the greatest governing body the world has ever seen—the aristocratic Roman senate. There is no "accident of birth"; every birth is the verdict of nature upon a marriage; and the perfect man comes only after generations of selection and preparation; "a man's ancestors have paid the price of what he is." "Aristocracy of intellect" is "a password among ambitious Jews. Intellect alone does not ennoble; on the contrary, something is always needed to ennoble intellect. What is needed? Blood."

Does this offend too much our long democratic ears? But "those races that cannot bear this philosophy are doomed; and those that regard it as the greatest blessing are destined to be the masters of the world." Only such an aristocracy can have the vision and the courage to make Europe a nation, to end this bovine nationalism, this petty *Vaterlanderei*. Let us be "good Europeans," as Napoleon was, and Goethe, and Beethoven, and Schopenhauer, and Stendhal, and Heine. Too long we have been fragments, shattered pieces of what might

¹⁰⁰When did this poor exile re-enter?

¹⁰¹Quoted by Nordau, *Degeneration*, New York, 1895; p. 439.

be a whole. How can a great culture grow in this air of patriotic prejudice and narrowing provincialism? The time for petty politics is past; the compulsion to great politics has come. When will the new race appear, and the new leaders? When will Europe be born?

Have ye not heard anything of my children? Speak to me of my garden, my Happy Isles, my new beautiful race. For their sake I am rich, for their sake I became poor . . . What have I not surrendered? What would I not surrender that I might have one thing: those children, that living plantation, those life-trees of my highest will and my highest hope?¹⁰²

IX. CRITICISM

It is a beautiful poem; and perhaps it is a poem rather than a philosophy. We know that there are absurdities here, and that the man went too far in an attempt to convince and correct himself; but we can see him suffering at every line, and we must love him even where we question him. There is a time when we tire of sentimentality and delusion, and Nietzsche comes to us as a tonic, like open spaces and fresh winds after a long ceremony in a crowded church. "He who knows how to breathe in the air of my writings is conscious that it is the air of the heights, that it is bracing. A man must be built for it; otherwise the chances are that it will kill him";¹⁰³ let none mistake this acid for infant's milk.

And then what style! "People will say, some day, that Heine and I were the greatest artists, by far, that ever wrote in German, and that

¹⁰²W. P., ii, 353, 362-4, 371, 422; B. G. E., 239; T. O. S., ii, 39; Z., 413.

¹⁰³E. H., 2.

we left the best any mere German could do an incalculable distance behind us."¹⁰⁴ And it is almost so. "My style dances," he says; every sentence is a lance; the language is supple, vigorous, nervous—the style of a fencer, too quick and brilliant for the normal eye. But on re-reading him we perceive that something of this brilliance is due to exaggeration, to an interesting but at last neurotic egotism, to an over-facile inversion of every accepted notion, the ridicule of every virtue, the praise of every vice; he takes, we discover, a sophomore's delight in shocking; we conclude that it is easy to be interesting when one has no prejudices in favor of morality. These dogmatic assertions, these unmodified generalizations, these prophetic repetitions, these contradictions—of others not more than of himself—reveal a mind that has lost its balance, and hovers on the edge of madness. At last this brilliance tires us out and exhausts our nerves, like whips upon the flesh, or loud emphasis in conversation, or promiscuous italics in correspondence. There is a sort of Teutonic bluster in this violence of speech; ¹⁰⁵ none of that restraint which is the first principle of art; none of that balance, harmony, and controversial urbanity, which Nietzsche so admired in the French. Nevertheless is it a powerful style; we are overwhelmed with the passion and iteration of it; Nietzsche does not prove, he announces and reveals; he wins us with his imagination rather than with his logic; he offers us not a philosophy merely, nor yet only a poem, but a new faith, a new hope, a new religion.

His thought, as much as his style, reveals him as a son of the Romantic movement. "What," he asks, "does a philosopher firstly

¹⁰⁴E. H., 39. Nietzsche thought himself a Pore.

¹⁰⁵Figgis, 230, 56.

and lastly require of himself? To overcome his age in himself, to become 'timeless.'" But this was a counsel of perfection which he more honored in the breach than in the observance; he was baptized with the spirit of his age, and by total immersion. He did not realize how Kant's subjectivism—"the world is my idea," as Schopenhauer honestly put it—had led to Fichte's "absolute ego," and this to Stirner's unbalanced individualism, and this to the unmoralism of the superman.¹⁰⁶ The superman is not merely Schopenhauer's "genius," and Carlyle's "hero," and Wagner's Siegfried; he looks suspiciously like Schiller's Karl Moor and Goethe's Götz; Nietzsche took more than the word *Uebermensch* from the young Goethe whose later Olympian calm he scorned so enviously. His letters are full of romantic sentiment and tenderness; "I suffer" recurs in them almost as frequently as "I die" in Heine.¹⁰⁷ He calls himself "a mystic and almost maniac soul," and speaks of *The Birth of Tragedy* as "the confession of a romanticist."¹⁰⁸ "I am afraid," he writes to Brandes, "that I am too much of a musician not to be a romanticist."¹⁰⁹ "An author must become silent when his work begins to speak";¹¹⁰ but Nietzsche never conceals himself, and rushes into the first person on every page. His exaltation of instinct against thought, of the individual against society, of the "Dionysian" against the "Apollonian" (i. e., the romantic against the classic type), betrays his time as definitely as the dates of his birth and his death. He was, for the philosophy of his age, what Wagner was

¹⁰⁶Cf. Santayana, *Egotism in German Philosophy*.

¹⁰⁷E. G., cf. Halevy, 231.

¹⁰⁸B. T., 6, xxv.

¹⁰⁹Quoted by Huneker, *Egoists*, 251.

¹¹⁰Quoted by Faguet, 9.

for its music—the culmination of the Romantic movement, the high tide of the Romantic stream; he liberated and exalted the “will” and the “genius” of Schopenhauer from all social restraint, as Wagner liberated and exalted the passion that had torn at its classic bonds in the Sonata Pathétique and the Fifth and Ninth Symphonies. He was the last great scion of the lineage of Rousseau.

Let us go back now on the road we have traveled with Nietzsche, and tell him, however ineffectually, some of the objections with which we were so often tempted to interrupt him. He was wise enough to see for himself, in his later years, how much absurdity had contributed to the originality of *The Birth of Tragedy*.¹¹¹ Scholars like Wilamowitz-Moellendorff laughed the book out of the philologic court. The attempt to deduce Wagner from Æschylus was the self-immolation of a young devotee before a despotic god. Who would have thought that the Reformation was “Dionysian”—i. e., wild, unmoral, vinous, Bacchanalian; and that the Renaissance was quite the opposite of these, quite restrained, moderate, “Apollonian”? Who would have suspected that “Socratism was the culture of the opera”?¹¹² The attack on Socrates was the disdain of a Wagnerian for logical thought; the admiration for Dionysus was a sedentary man’s idolatry of action (hence also the apotheosis of Napoleon), and a bashful bachelor’s secret envy of masculine bibulousness and sexuality. Perhaps Nietzsche was right in considering the pre-Socratic age as the halcyon days of Greece; no doubt the Peloponnesian War undermined the economic and political basis of Periclean culture. But it

¹¹¹Cf. B. T., pp. 1 and 4 of the Introduction.

¹¹²B. T., 142.

was a little absurd to see in Socrates only a disintegrating criticism (as if Nietzsche's own function was not chiefly this) and not also a work of salvage for a society ruined not by philosophy but by war and corruption and immorality. Only a professor of paradox could rank the obscure and dogmatic fragments of Heraclitus above the mellowed wisdom and the developed art of Plato. Nietzsche denounces Plato, as he denounces all his creditors—no man is a hero to his debtor; but what is Nietzsche's philosophy but the ethics of Thrasy-machus and Callicles, and the politics of Plato's Socrates?—With all his philology, Nietzsche never quite penetrated to the spirit of the Greeks; never learned the lesson that moderation and self-knowledge (as taught by the Delphic inscriptions and the greater philosophers) must bank, without extinguishing, the fires of passion and desire;¹¹³ that Apollo must limit Dionysus. Some have described Nietzsche as a pagan; but he was not that: neither Greek pagan like Pericles nor German pagan like Goethe; he lacked the balance and restraint that made these men strong. "I shall give back to men the serenity which is the condition of all culture," he writes,¹¹⁴ but alas, how can one give what one has not?

Of all Nietzsche's books, *Zarathustra* is safest from criticism, partly because it is obscure, and partly because its inexpugnable merits dwarf all fault-finding. The idea of eternal recurrence, though common to the "Apollonian" Spencer as well as to the "Dionysian" Nietzsche, strikes one as an unhealthy fancy, a weird last-minute effort to recover the belief in immortality. Every critic has seen

¹¹³Cf. Santayana, 141.

¹¹⁴In Halevy, 192.

the contradiction between the bold preachment of egoism (Zarathustra "proclaims the Ego whole and holy, and selfishness blessed"—an unmistakable echo of Stirner) and the appeal to altruism and self-sacrifice in the preparation and service of the superman. But who, reading this philosophy, will classify himself as servant, and not as superman?

As for the ethical system of *Beyond Good and Evil* and *The Genealogy of Morals*, it is stimulating exaggeration. We acknowledge the need of asking men to be braver, and harder on themselves—almost all ethical philosophies have asked that; but there is no urgent necessity for asking people to be crueler and "more evil"¹¹⁵—surely this is a work of supererogation? And there is no great call to complain that morality is a weapon used by the weak to limit the strong; the strong are not too deeply impressed by it, and make rather clever use of it in turn: most moral codes are imposed from above rather than from below; and the crowd praises and blames by prestige imitation. It is well, too, that humility should be occasionally maltreated; "we have had deprecation and ducking long enough," as the good gray poet said; but one does not observe any superabundance of this quality in modern character. Nietzsche here fell short of that historical sense which he lauded as so necessary to philosophy; or he would have seen the doctrine of meekness and humbleness of heart as a necessary antidote to the violent and warlike virtues of the barbarians who nearly destroyed, in the first millennium of the Christian era, that very culture to which Nietzsche always returns for nourishment and refuge. Surely this wild em-

¹¹⁵Cf. Nordau, *Degeneration*, 451, for a rather hectic attack on Nietzsche as an imaginative sadist.

phasis on power and movement is the echo of a feverish and chaotic age? This supposedly universal "will to power" hardly expresses the quiescence of the Hindu, the calm of the Chinese, or the satisfied routine of the medieval peasant. Power is the idol of some of us; but most of us long rather for security and peace.

In general, as every reader will have perceived, Nietzsche fails to recognize the place and value of the social instincts; he thinks the egoistic and individualistic impulses need reinforcement by philosophy! One must wonder where were Nietzsche's eyes when all Europe was forgetting, in a slough of selfish wars, those cultural habits and acquisitions which he admired so much, and which depend so precariously on co-operation and social amenity and self-restraint. The essential function of Christianity has been to moderate, by the inculcation of an extreme ideal of gentleness, the natural barbarity of men; and any thinker who fears that men have been corrupted out of egoism into an excess of Christian virtue needs only to look about him to be comforted and reassured.

Made solitary by illness and nervousness, and forced into a war with the sluggishness and mediocrity of men, Nietzsche was led to suppose that all the great virtues are the virtues of men who stand alone. He reacted from Schopenhauer's submergence of the individual in the species to an unbalanced liberation of the individual from social control. Foiled in his search for love, he turned upon woman with a bitterness unworthy of a philosopher, and unnatural in a man; missing parentage and losing friendship, he never knew that the finest moments of life come through mutuality and friendship, rather than from domination and war. He did not live long enough, or widely

enough, to mature his half-truths into wisdom. Perhaps if he had lived longer he would have turned his strident chaos into a harmonious philosophy. Truer of him than of the Jesus to whom he applied them, were his own words: "He died too early; he himself would have revoked his doctrine, had he reached" a riper age; "noble enough to revoke he was!"¹¹⁶ But death had other plans.

Perhaps in politics his vision is sounder than in morals. Aristocracy is the ideal government; who shall deny it? "O ye kind heavens! there is in every nation... a fittest, a wisest, bravest, best; whom could we find and make king over us, all were in truth well . . . By what art discover him? Will the heavens in their pity teach us no art? For our need of him is great!"¹¹⁷ But who are the best? Do the best appear only in certain families, and must we therefore have hereditary aristocracy? But we had it; and it led to clique-pursuits, class-irresponsibility, and stagnation. Perhaps aristocracies have been saved, as often as destroyed, by intermarriage with the middle classes; how else has the English aristocracy maintained itself? - And perhaps inbreeding degenerates? Obviously there are many sides to these complex problems, at which Nietzsche has flung so lustily his Yeas and Nays.¹¹⁸ Hereditary aristocracies do not like world-unification; they tend to a narrowly nationalistic policy, however cosmopolitan they may be in conduct; if they abandoned nationalism they would lose a main source of their power—the manipulation of foreign relations—And perhaps a world-

¹¹⁶Z., 99-100.

¹¹⁷Carlyle, *Past and Present*, New York, 1901.

¹¹⁸"In my youth," says Nietzsche somewhere, "I flung at the world with Yea and Nay; now in my old age I do penance for it."

state would not be so beneficial to culture as Nietzsche thinks; large masses move slowly; and Germany probably did more for culture when she was merely "a geographical expression," with independent courts rivalling one another in the patronage of art, than in her days of unity and empire and expansion; it was not an emperor who cherished Goethe and rescued Wagner. It is a common delusion that the great periods of culture have been ages of hereditary aristocracy: on the contrary, the efflorescent periods of Pericles and the Medici and Elizabeth and the Romantic age were nourished with the wealth of a rising bourgeoisie; and the creative work in literature and art was not done by aristocratic families but by the offspring of the middle class—by such men as Socrates, who was the son of a mid-wife, and Voltaire, who was the son of an attorney, and Shakespeare, who was the son of a butcher. It is ages of movement and change that stimulate cultural creation; ages in which a new and vigorous class is rising to power and pride. And so in politics: it would be suicidal to exclude from statesmanship such genius as lacked aristocratic pedigree; the better formula, surely, is a "career open to talent" wherever born; and genius has a way of getting born in the most outlandish places. Let us be ruled by *all* the best. An aristocracy is good only if it is a fluent body of men whose patent to power lies not in birth but in ability—an aristocracy continually selected and nourished out of a democracy of open and equal opportunity to all.

After these deductions (if they must be made), what remains? Enough to make the critic uncomfortable. Nietzsche has been refuted by every aspirant to respectability; and yet he stands as a milestone in modern thought, and a mountain-peak in German prose. No

doubt he was guilty of a little exaggeration when he predicted that the future would divide the past into "Before Nietzsche" and "After Nietzsche"; but he did succeed in effecting a wholesome critical review of institutions and opinions that for centuries had been taken for granted. It remains that he opened a new vista into Greek drama and philosophy; that he showed at the outset the seeds of romantic decadence in the music of Wagner; that he analyzed our human nature with a subtlety as sharp as a surgeon's knife, and perhaps as salutary; that he laid bare some hidden roots of morality as no other modern thinker had done;¹¹⁹ that "he introduced a value hitherto practically unknown in the realms of ethics—namely, aristocracy";¹²⁰ that he compelled an honest taking of thought about the ethical implications of Darwinism; that he wrote the greatest prose poem in the literature of his century; and (this above all) that he conceived of man as something that man must surpass. He spoke with bitterness, but with invaluable sincerity; and his thought went through the clouds and cobwebs of the modern mind like cleansing lightning and a rushing wind. The air of European philosophy is clearer and fresher now because Nietzsche wrote.¹²¹

¹¹⁹Though of course the essentials of Nietzsche's ethic are to be found in Plato, Machiavelli, Hobbes, La Rochefoucauld, and even in the Vautrin of Balzac's *Père Goriot*.

¹²⁰Simmel.

¹²¹The extensive influence of Nietzsche on contemporary literature will need no pointing out to those who are familiar with the writings of Artzibashef, Strindberg, Przybyzewski, Hauptmann, Dehmel, Hamsun, and d'Annunzio.

X. FINALE

"I love him who willeth the creation of something beyond himself, and then perisheth," said Zarathustra.¹²²

Undoubtedly Nietzsche's intensity of thought consumed him prematurely. His battle against his time had unbalanced his mind; "it has always been found a terrible thing to war with the moral system of one's age; it will have its revenge . . . from within and from without."¹²³ Towards the end Nietzsche's work grew in bitterness; he attacked persons as well as ideas—Wagner, Christ, etc. "Growth in wisdom," he wrote, "may be exactly measured by decrease in bitterness":¹²⁴ but he could not convince his pen. Even his laughter became neurotic as his mind broke down; nothing could better reveal the poison that was corroding him than the reflection: "Perhaps I know best why man is the only animal that laughs: he alone suffers so excruciatingly that he was compelled to invent laughter."¹²⁵ Disease and increasing blindness were the physiological side of his breakdown.¹²⁶ He began to give way to paranoic delusions of grandeur and persecution; he sent one of his books to Taine with a note assuring the great critic that it was the most marvelous book ever written;¹²⁷ and he filled his last book, *Ecce Homo*, with

¹²²Z., 86.

¹²³Ellis, 39.

¹²⁴Quoted by Ellis, 80.

¹²⁵W. P., i, 24.

¹²⁶Cf. the essay on Nietzsche in Gould's *Biographical Clinic*.

¹²⁷Figgis, 43.

such mad self-praise as we have seen.¹²⁸ *Ecce homo!*—alas, we behold the man here too clearly!

Perhaps a little more appreciation by others would have forestalled this compensatory egotism, and given Nietzsche a better hold upon perspective and sanity. But appreciation came too late. Taine sent him a generous word of praise when almost all others ignored or reviled him; Brandes wrote to tell him that he was giving a course of lectures on the "aristocratic radicalism" of Nietzsche at the University of Copenhagen; Strindberg wrote to say that he was turning Nietzsche's ideas to dramatic use; perhaps best of all, an anonymous admirer sent a check for \$400. But when these bits of light came, Nietzsche was almost blind in sight and soul; and he had abandoned hope. "My time is not yet," he wrote; "only the day after tomorrow belongs to me."¹²⁹

The last blow came at Turin in January, 1889, in the form of a stroke of apoplexy. He stumbled blindly back to his attic room, and dashed off mad letters; to Cosima Wagner, four words—"Ariadne, I love you"; to Brandes a longer message, signed "The Crucified"; and to Burckhardt and Overbeck such fantastic missives that the latter hurried to his aid. He found Nietzsche plowing the piano with his elbows, singing and crying his Dionysian ecstasy.

They took him at first to an asylum,¹³⁰ but soon his old mother came to claim him and take him under her own forgiving care. What a picture!—the pious woman who had borne sensitively but patiently the shock of her son's apostasy from all that she held dear, and who,

¹²⁸E. H., 10; cf. Nordau, 465.

¹²⁹E. H., 55.

¹³⁰"The right man in the right place," says the brutal Nordau.

loving him none the less, received him now into her arms, like another *Pieta*. She died in 1897, and Nietzsche was taken by his sister to live with her in Weimar. There a statue of him was made by Kramer—a pitiful thing, showing the once powerful mind broken, helpless, and resigned. Yet he was not all unhappy; the peace and quiet which he had never had when sane were his now; Nature had had mercy on him when she made him mad. He caught his sister once weeping as she looked at him, and he could not understand her tears; “Lisbeth,” he asked, “why do you cry? Are we not happy?” On one occasion he heard talk of books; his pale face lit up: “Ah!” he said, brightening, “I too have written some good books”—and the lucid moment passed.

He died in 1900. Seldom has a man paid so great a price for genius.

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